Autopsy Pictures, X-rays - play on Wecht 8/26/72 press conference. 8/27/72 HW

Wecht was at the Archives Wednesday and Thursday. Unless plans were changed, he conferred with his "experts", identities unknown to me, Wednesday night.

Just after 11 last night our nephew called to tell me to get Baltimore's Channel 2, which was saying that a pathologist said more than one man had shot JFK. While he was telling me this he also told me that it had ended. Thus I new Cyril had said something.

This morning's Post carries nothing. I awakened during the night and listened for a short while to the CBS all-news station in Chicago. This was on the hourly break, and there was then no mention nor was there in the summary of the news to follow.

I returned to bed, awaking a little before six, and began monitoring all-news WAVA from 7 a.m. sign-on, there being no other news during that hour. WAVA carries Mutual on the hour and half-hour. No mention. At 8 I got WTOP, the Washington Post's all-news a.m. Nothing from the net on the hour, nothing for the rest of the hour, nothing on the break. At 9 I decided to try NBC. WBAL, Baltimore, had nothing.

Locals WFMD and WHMI use AP and UPI, respectively. I spoke to the men who read the night wire and what had come in after signon. No mention.

There was about a half-column in the Washington Star-News, which was read to me. Cyril held a press conference in Pittsburgh yesterday, according to this page 2 story and came up with the earth-shaking revelation that the Warren Report hinges on the "magic bullet" theory, hardly new, and that examination of the film and bullet and fragments tells him it is impossible for Lee Harvey Oswald alone to have done the job. Regardless of how Cyril put it, the AP's handling is that Oswald was one, which should make Sylvoa happy! It quotes Cyril as saying he had spent two days on the autopsy material, which was not his original plan, as refusing to guess how many shooters there may have been, as saying nothing about the fatal wound, and absolutely nothing about what he saw, what film, what X-rays, what they do or do not show.

There was no mention on WTOP-TV's 11 p.m. news last night.

The AP copy need not be an accurate reflection of what Cyril actually said but it is an accurate reflection of the most that could have been expected and of the amateurishness if not the selfishness of the whole operation. I do not suggest this is Cyril's last word and I believe to the contrary, that he has something more in mind, a first-person account in some medical or forensic journal where he will get the attention he wants, not to the detriment of his malpractise business.

Picking a Saturday was the grossest incompetence, which bears on his intentions of competence, his willigness to listen to advice or the advice given him, and particularly with major news competition on a weekend was bound to limit coverage and attention. Picking Pittsburgh was an ego thing only, for that is where he lives and can lap up the attention. He was in Washington, where countless correspondents of all the major papers might have been enticed to such a press conference, regardless of what might or might not have made the wire. The one thing that makes sense out of not staging in Washington is the caution I gave others, of the vicious attack that could be made on him by accurate quotation of his own irresponsible and stupid statements of the past. Any such backgrounding would have been of the Washington press on the logical assumption he was hold his press conference there. Pgh may, in fact, have increased prospects of wire coverage, for there is prejudice in Washington on the subject. But the major attention would have been possible, whether or not probable, in Washington or in NYC. Of course, not holding it either place and holding it in Pgh did personalize him more, did detach him from all others in the field, make it seem like he alone had the knowledge, had made his study entirely independently, etc. How those who helped him feel I don't know, as I also don't know what, if any, attention he got elsewhere. It will be interesting to see. It is also interesting that the AP Pgh reporter knew of Lattimer and played him off against Cyril, saying Lattimer was the first to see the stuff and concluded exactly the opposite from the same stuff.

If this is the kind of attention Cyril got elsewhere, perhaps the worst that has happened to date is the laying of an egg. I do not think limited attention will motivate the kind of response that could be hurtful. The laying of an egg is enough harm, for the more of this kind of stuff there is, the less likelihood there is of a solid presentation getting any attention.

My hunch is that there was less chance of net TV in Pgh origin first because it involves a feed and on a weekend. I think Cyril would have been within his rights in asking CBS for the treatment and time Lattimer got, but I also think it would have been to invite disaster, for he could not expect the reception Lattimer got and the devastating tapes of his previous incredible comments are in NYC.

Assuming the competence of the AP reporter, which the story indicates, and the fairness, which is also indicated, bringing in Lattimer not departing from norm (and it was handled straight), there remains a reasonable question about the competence, both professional and public relations, of what Cyril said. One would be within reasonable comment in saying that the thing for a pathologist to have done would not be to argue a case but to cited evidence, 1,2,3, etc., and then say based on this evidence, etc. If Cyril did this, most of it had to have been ignored, for this story is void of citation of either this approach or such evidence. So, why did he see the stuff, having said nothing not already said over and over again and nothing that comes from this evidence alone and, in fact, nothing at all indicative to the informed reader or an editor that the withheld contract material contains anything not already well known.

At the very best, this lowers the thing to a conflict between experts in their interpretations of the same evidence and that accomplishes nothing. So, what else is new?

The local WHH user of UPI has been watching the wire. to 10:30 a.m. nothing has moved. They are fed from Baltimore, which is weekendstaffed by the more junior of the staff. Those on duty recall nothing, and they should have the A wire for the preparation of their State and Radio services. A more experienced man is out and is to return the call if there was anything on the A wire.

In summary, as of the limited state of my knowledge to after 10:30 a.m., it seems that

We failed by too much to get the kind of attention that could have been gotten with a decent presentation in the right place and way;

We thereby have less or little chance of suffering the reaction major attention could have been expected to trigger;

Cyril did get the personal attention it was clear to me from the first was his major interest, all personalized and likely greater where he lives and has recently entered politics;

Cyril still has possibilities of further personal attention in whatever he will write, which will certainly be better done than this part; and,

Depending on the attention gotten by his coming activities, there remains the possibilities I have feared.

Noon 8/27/72

Of the two earlier pages of this memo I had made few copies, intending no distribution among what I can hardly again call "the critical community". On finishing it ~~as~~ had begun to read what has, from the short part of it I did read, remarkable appropriateness, the almost-complete text of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's undelivered Nobel acceptance speeah, "The Truth of Art". It is in today's Wash. Post. I had hardly passed his quotation of Vladimir Solovey, to which I subscribe, when the phone rang. That quote is,

Even in change we ~~xxxx~~ ourselves must complete
That circle which the gods have mapped out for us.

I spare you the obvious, a lecture on who has helped forge the chains.

The phone call was from one of the correspondents with whom I had consulted on the expectable, to test my own estimate of so long ago, Ian McDonald of The Times Of London. He has the weekend trick today. He read me Graham's entire story, noting as he did each of those forecasts I had accurately made to him so long ago.

We spent more than an hours on the phone, discussing the story and quotes of Wecht as we went, the stupidities of the arrogant ignorant so clear in this story and in those areas worse than I had anticipated, worse than the ambitions who have abdicated yet presume to dominate can, I think, see -the added danger if his demands are now honored. I can only hope they are not. They may be the norms of forensic pathology, as I presume, but they are new and even less needed disaster.

Were I the kind of man so many of you have deceived yourself into believing me to be, thereby deceiving yourselves about yourselves, I would delight in chapter and verse on how I told you so, as indeed I did. I am instead sick to have been right, and sickened more that such fine minds could be so closed, such bright eyes so clouded for so long. Instead I restrict myself to two comments. One is that despite my opposition to all of what I anticipated, I went out of my way WITH GRAHAM to accredit Cyril, when Howard happened by accident to be here. In doing that I gave Graham each of Cyril's phones of which I know to be sure contacting him would be easy. AND THIS WAS BEFORE LATTIMER SAW ANYTHING. If any of you doubts this, Howard heard my end of that conversation and I invite your asking him. This should tell you as much about yourselves as about me, those of you I address. Secondly, I indulge a writers ego and quote myself (from WWII, a chapter title), there are none so blind as those who <u>will</u> not see.

Those of you who clearly wanted to let more Kennedy blood, rejoice! You have done it! Taste it and enjoy it, for that, if not the only, is the immediate reward of your labors. Savor its richness, for you have nothing else. Nothing you want, anyway.

You do have what you don't want, an exculpation of all the guilty.

So enjoy what little you can.

You also have the incrimination of the innocent, and that, consciously or otherwise, you did want and you did get. If you do not on your own understand this, I will explain separately to those worth the time and any longer worthy of any trust. The others, well, just don't believe me and be happier for it.

Christ! If you but understood it, <u>Lattimer</u> did us more good!

But console yourself: the soul (had he one) of the departed Hoover is in your debt.

Be content: Specter ought now like you more than Walter Cronkite and CBS.

Be proud of your accomplishments: you have buried truth deeper than Hoover and his collaborators, and this is no mean accomplishment. So, <u>be</u> proud!

Exult! You did what you set out to do. Perhaps all of it is not yet accomplished, but the only thing you can add is hurt of me, and that also many of you, consciously or otherwise, lusted for. The tragedy is that by this your lust will not be satisfied. Nor will it be when Cyril writes whatever he does for whatever journal he elects or has elected.

Or do you consider that you have at last been party to bringing the truth to light, that the Kennedy family is responsible for all the suppressions of the vital evidence. The brain, of course, <u>is</u> the vital evidence. And Robert Kennedy did do something with it, did he not? Believe Marion Johnson, not me, for that is less uncomfortable. The brain! Ah, that is the answer to all, as it is Cyril's only original testimony (in an entirely different context) in Judge Halleck's court, where there was entirely different significance.

Do join him in the fight for the missing slides of tissue samples! Do. Don't worry if you prove scorching on the real tissue slide, for that is what the Commission said.

Worry less about the non-existent slides that can't be produced because they never did exist. Just force the production of what will be accepted of proof of the infamy you pretend to abhor and oppose but by your actions support.

You keep pressing with Cyril for the production of that thing he said could be a bullet (for elephants if not for Presidents, but without the power of cream puffs), that "structure" so few of you understood when it was in the panel report. Don't let it trouble you in the slightest that there is no reason to believe it shows in the original X-rays, as a bullet would have. It can't, of course, be Davidson's ice bullet. Nor can it be Garrison's (and CIA's/Bob Smith's) frangible bullet. So, let it be a plastic bullet? Do plastics show in X-rays? Be untroubled about the improbability of any bullet, ice, plastic or lead, deforming itself into a perfect rectangle. Give it that old college try? Hoover will appreciate. Specter, Belin, Ball, Liebeler - the dead Dulles -they will appreciate it, too. Let nothing impede your quest for untainted truth! Truth alone is your client, isn't it? And, naturally, Cyril's, too.

Indulge an aging and tiring man's unhidden ego as he again, in paraphrase, quotes himself (again WWII): Truth had such friends she had no need of enemies.

You've just gotta be right. Didn't NBC just have a two-hour special pinning all the blame for Vietnam on JFK? Can you be in better blood-letting company?

You have the apology I owe you. I do not have the Times in front of me. I am indeed, as some have alleged, secretly both wealthy and a miser, and thus I will not spend the cost of the paper or add another 10 miles to the more than 100,000 on my car to get it. If I did have it before me, being more eye-minded than ear-minded, I might find a few more of the encomiums you so richly deserve. Eventually I'll get it. If you yearn for it, ask it. I'll find the time. Never were such panegyrics so warranted. This is the least I can do for you. Most of all do I consider that I owe this obligation to those who, in not helping bring out POST MORTEM when you could without real hurt, laid a basis of credibility for Burke Marshall's updating of Marc Antony's oration.

If I have not, in these fewer words than you have earned, satisfied you, indulge again the prerogative I assert as I am about to begin my 70th decade and reread parts of the Epilogue to WWII. Those of you who find anathema reference to the Kennedy name substitute for JFK simply "truth". And enjoy!

At the end of our conversation I asked Ian to summarize his impressions of the Graham piece. I told him my purpose was to include them in a memo to others and I wouldn't mention his name. He said by all means to use it, so I do. These are:

There is nothing all that new (the flap in the skull left rear is all that is).

It bears out my warnings of long standing that the Kennedys would be shafted (his word).

It exculpates all but the Kennedys.

And it is not straight treatment by Graham. This came only when I asked him a leading question. The others he volunteered. I did not expect straight treatment. I had ample reason not to expect straight treatment, even by the standards of a by-lined piece.

It is, as must be clear, my intent to bring you comfort. So let me add to that. Ian was undecided whether he would file a short piece on this. If he did, what would I say on the record. I said this added nothing significant to what was known, fell far short of what was known, and falsely pinned resposibility for suppression of the essential evidence on those not responsible, exculpating the guilty and incriminating those not guilty.Thus, for those of you who would cast me in the role of villain, I have done it for you and confess it.

I have an added word of comfort for those who profess dedication to the Oswald cause, where some have been pretty explicit. Cyril held an added press conference in Pittsburgh, apparently yesterday. He said Oswald alone could not have fired all the shots, according to AP. Everyman's translation: Oswald did fire some.Onward and upward with TRUTH!

Your convenient villain,

Harold Weisberg